

Sacramento^{PAM FILE}

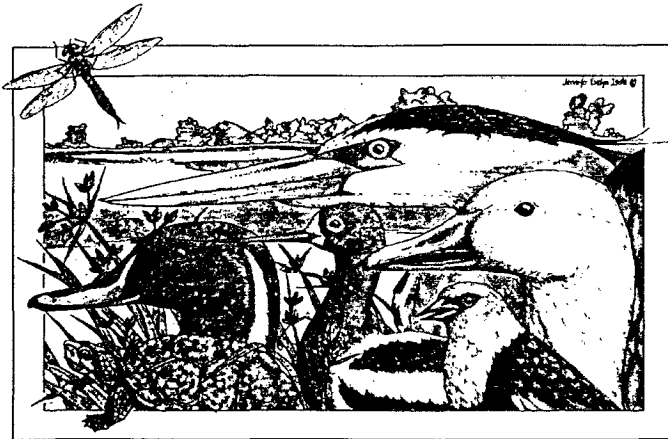
National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Environmental Education Program Guide



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Welcome!

Sacramento NWR Complex

Planning Your Visit

Resources

Check List

“To administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans”

*National Wildlife Refuge System
Mission Statement*



*The “blue goose” is the symbol of the
National Wildlife Refuge System*

Welcome and thank you for your interest in Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex's Environmental Education Program! This guide is designed to enhance your visit and ensure a positive field trip experience. By becoming familiar with available classroom and field trip activities, you will have the best opportunity to discover and enjoy the wildlife and beautiful scenery of the Refuges. We will do all we can to make your visit a rewarding and educational experience.



Great Blue Heron

What is the Sacramento NWR Complex?

The Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex is part of a network of over 500 NWRs managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to protect over 93 million acres of habitat. Created in 1937, Sacramento NWR is the headquarters for the Complex of six refuges: Sacramento NWR, Delevan NWR, Colusa NWR, Sutter NWR, Butte Sink NWR, and Sacramento River NWR (map on back page).

Why is the Sacramento NWR Complex Important?

For thousands of years, the Sacramento Valley has been a major wintering area for migratory waterfowl (ducks, geese and swans) along the Pacific Flyway. California is the winter destination of more than 60% of the waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway.

Unfortunately, the wetlands upon which these birds depend have been drastically reduced over the years. It is estimated that 90 – 95% of the wetland acres that existed in California during the late 1800's have been lost. Most have been converted to other land uses, such as agriculture and urbanization. In view of this drastic decrease, it has become imperative that the Sacramento NWR Complex habitats are managed in the most intensive and productive manner possible.

The Refuges also provide habitat for rare and endangered species and contain examples of other disappearing habitats such as vernal pools and riparian forests.

The American avocet is one of the 269 species of birds that benefit from the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex habitats.



American Avocet

*Located on
Pacific Flyway*

*Wetland Habitat Lost
to Other Uses*

*Home for Rare and
Endangered Species*

*Nature is the
Best Classroom*

*Peak Time to
View Wildlife*

Let the wetlands become your outdoor classroom as you experience nature firsthand. Watch a coyote hunting for rodents or shorebirds probing the ground for snails and worms. Cup your hand behind your ears and listen to the beautiful sounds of red-winged blackbirds. Watch a heron or egret silently stalk fish, frogs, and invertebrates. Gently feel the stem of a bulrush. Observe red-tailed hawks swoop and circle as they hunt rodents. Watch and listen to warblers, woodpeckers, and other songbirds feed and move among cottonwood willows. Search for animal tracks in the soft mud along waterways and the

Though the ideal time for wildlife viewing is October through March, you may see a diversity of wildlife year-round. The peak time to see migrating waterfowl is November through January. The tours at Sacramento and Colusa National Wildlife Refuges meander through a variety of habitats where large concentrations of waterfowl may be seen during peak migration.

*Sacramento NWR
(Complex Headquarters)*

Facilities

- Visitor center with large wildlife exhibit and interpretive kiosk is open daily October through March and weekdays only April through September. Hours are 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.
- Large paved parking lot at the visitor center accommodates all vehicles including buses.
- Public restrooms, drinking fountain, and picnic benches located at the visitor center
- Graveled six-mile auto tour and two-mile self-guided walking trail
- Three tiered wildlife viewing platform with spotting scopes
- All public facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.

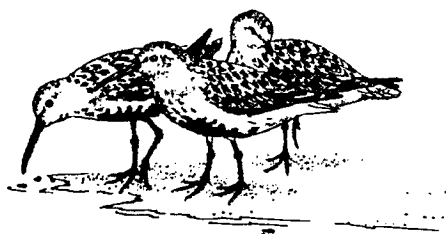
Colusa NWR

- Interpretive kiosk
- Parking area and portable restroom
- Graveled three-mile auto tour and one-mile self-guided walking trail

*Sacramento River NWR,
Llano Seco Unit*

- Interpretive kiosk.
- Graveled parking area.
- Two-thirds of a mile walking trail.
- Two wildlife viewing platforms.

All auto tour routes and trails are open year-round from sunrise to sunset.



Dunlin



Planning Ahead For

The Complex headquarters is the main Environmental Education Center located at Sacramento River and Willows. Field trips are limited to, guided walks, bird hunts, hands-on learning, and wildlife viewing platforms.

*Field Trip
Activities*

Discovery Pack

A Discovery Pack with field guides, dip nets, field guides, boxes, lenses, and other equipment is available by reservation. Programs are available at Colusa NWR, Sacramento River NWR, Llano Seco Unit.

Reservations

To reserve a visit, please call or fill out a Reservation Form. Early reservations are recommended. We will do our best to accommodate your group's needs. Weather, wind and light rain, may affect the visit.

Resource Materials

To assist you in your pre- and post-visit classroom activities, a collection of resource materials is available by reservation. Due to a high demand, all items listed on the following pages, except for packets, *must be returned within seven working days of receiving them*. To request any of these items, please fill out the "Materials For Classroom Activities" section of the Reservation Form.



Mourning Doves

Resource Packets

Teacher Packet

This resource folder contains Refuge brochures and background materials on waterfowl migration and freshwater marshes.

Habitat Fun Pack

Provided by the California Central Valley Habitat Joint Venture, this reusable packet contains games and activities that will create an awareness of waterfowl as a disappearing resource and a sense of value for birds and their habitat (K-3rd grade, 4th-6th grade, and Junior/ Senior High).

Discovery Pack Information

This background information will help you become familiar with the five Discovery Pack activities before you come to the Refuge.

Coloring Book and/ or Slides

The slides portray common birds and mammals of the Refuges, which are depicted in the coloring book with simple bold line drawings. A color key is provided which makes it easy for students to select correct colors and fill in the pictures (20 slides, K-2nd grade).

America's National Wildlife Refuge System

Resource

Stunning network U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 11 min

California's Tule Elk

This documentary film depicts the life of a tule elk in the Central Valley. Accompanied by a teacher's guide. 26 min

The Canada Goose Story

From the story of a goose's migration. 20 min

Conserving America's Heritage

This fast-paced film depicts the history of the Central Valley. 4 min

Coots, Coots Everywhere

Discover the life of a coot in the Central Valley. 30 min

Endangered Species Act/ Endangered

Beautiful overview of endangered species in the Central Valley. 25 min

Fabulous Wetlands

Join Bill Wacky, a wacky, wetland scientist. 7 min

Fish in the Web of Life

Explore the Pacific steelhead's life cycle. 22 min

A Home for Pearl

An instructional film about the Central Valley's habitat. 70 min

In Celebration of America's Wildlife

Dramatic management of wildlife. A teacher's guide. 28 min

Resource Videos (continued)

Junior Duck Stamp Program, Conservation Through the Arts

Discover how the Junior Duck Stamp program is beneficial to students.

13 minutes, 4th grade and up

Rare and Endangered Plants of California

Explore California's unique habitats, discover reasons for habitat decline, and learn the importance of biodiversity. This video can also be used with the Curriculum Guide to California's Vanishing Flora.

18 minutes, 4th grade and up

Wetland Homes

Take a "jet field trip" to discover different types of wetlands and the wildlife which live in them.

20 minutes, Kindergarten and up

Wetlands – We Need Them

Learn about the remarkable plants and animals which depend on wetlands for life.

20 minutes, Kindergarten and up

Wild About Life!

Concerned teenagers and professional biologists use good science and common sense to restore biodiversity.

55 minutes, 6th grade and up

Wild Things '98

Take a field trip entitled "Shorebirds: Running on Empty" to learn the wonders of these long-distance migrants.

20 minutes, 3rd grade and up

Other videos available upon request.

Resource Animal Mounts

Arrangements must be made to pick up and return mounts.

Mounts may be borrowed for no longer than one week.

Availability of mounts is subject to demand.



Ducks

- Northern Pintail
- Mallard
- American Wigeon
- Bufflehead
- Northern Shoveler

Geese

- Snow Goose
- Cackling Canada Goose
- Ross' Goose
- White-fronted Goose

Mammals

- Muskrat
- Black-tailed Jackrabbit

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- Muskrat
- Black-tailed Jackrabbit
- Mallard
- Bufflehead
- Cackling Canada Goose
- White-fronted Goose



Belted Kingfisher

Preparing For Your Visit

- It is your responsibility to provide ample discipline and assist the tour guide. A 1:10 student to adult ratio is recommended for a smooth visit.
- The viewing platforms at the Sacramento NWR and Sacramento River NWR, Llano Seco Unit are approximately twenty feet high. For your safety, we ask that you not climb up on the railings or stand on benches.
- Wildlife are frightened away by loud sounds – talk quietly, walk softly and gently close vehicle doors.
- Weather varies daily – please come prepared for all conditions.

Field Trip Check List

- Lunch, snacks, water
- Trash bags (three or four, depending on group size)
- Binoculars
- Layers of clothes, old tennis shoes
- Any videos or mounts that need to be returned

We look forward to seeing you!